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THE GULL



GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER VOL. 88 NO. 7 SEPTEMBER 2003

FOUNDED 1917

GGAS Takes Families on First Trips to the Ocean

On a Thursday afternoon in May, GGAS high school intern Ana Martinez (an East Oakland resident and June graduate of Fremont High School) and I arrived at Markham Elementary School in East Oakland to present an environmental education program to families of fourth-grade students. A teacher, looking exhausted after a long day, informed me she wasn't expecting many parents to show up. "It's difficult," she said. "Many are single parents or have two jobs, and they can't even come to parent-teacher conferences."

But by 4:15, Ana and I were explaining tidepools and leading a game of tidepool pictiography to a crowded room of mesmerized grandparents, parents, and children. Most of the participants were African-American and Hispanic. I recognized one of the fathers who sells burritos from a truck outside our office on International Boulevard. Another parent told me she was not planning to come, but her son begged so much, she could not refuse.

Golden Gate Audubon Society's Martin Luther King, Jr. Education Program has provided environmental education to fourth- and fifth-grade students in East Oakland for the past several years. This year, a total of 250 parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings took part in GGAS' first family education program, which consists of an after-school introductory program and a Saturday field trip, either to Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Park or to the ocean.



Exploring tidepools at the Marine Fitzgerald Reserve.

A Day at the Beach

On our first family field trip to the Marine Fitzgerald Reserve in Half Moon Bay, more than 80 people showed up, overflowing from the bus into the cars of volunteers. Most of

FIRST TRIPS. continued on page 12

Wind Power: Green? Or Red?

As the popularity of hydroelectric and nuclear power as "clean" sources of electricity has declined, wind power is increasingly promoted as the new "clean" and guilt-free energy source. Wind turbines have been proposed for the middle of the Bay on the old Berkeley Pier, at the base of San Francisco's Bayview Hill next to Candlestick Point, and on the San Francisco watershed lands in Alameda County. San Francisco voters recently passed several bond measures that could provide funding for wind power projects as well as for solar power.

But before these proposals are implemented, perhaps we need to look a little more closely at this supposedly clean source of power. Wind power, while innocent of toxic discharges into the air, is a bloody source of power if situated in the wrong location.

On Altamont Pass, for example, approximately 40 Golden Eagles die every year as a result of collisions with the wind turbines there. Hundreds of Red-tailed Hawks and other raptors suffer the same fate, as do smaller birds such as Meadowlarks. Those gleaming blades drip with blood. The fatality numbers have been documented by years of study performed under the auspices of the Avian Subcommittee of the National Wind Coordinating Council.

Actually, only 25 percent of the turbines at Altamont are responsible for a majority of the bird deaths. Scientists, however, do not know why only certain turbines kill birds. They have tried differ-

WIND POWER. continued on page 10

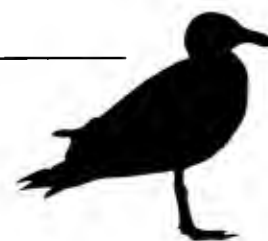
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COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation: Jacqui Smalley* 510.655.0998
Education: Allan Ridley
FAWR: Leora Feeney 510.522.8525
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Finance: Kevin Consey*
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Major Gifts: Allan Ridley 415.566.3241
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Publicity: Marjorie Blackwell*
 *Board of Directors '04

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRD BOX
 415.681.7422

OBSERVATIONS

Bruce Mast bmast@alumni.rice.edu

GGAS WEBMASTER

Tomas Latham webmaster@goldengateaudubon.org

EDITOR

Eva Guralnick 415.282.4111
 eva@egcommunications.com

COPY EDITOR

Marjorie Blackwell

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Elizabeth Murdock 510.843.9912

CONSERVATION/EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Arthur Feinstein 510.843.6551

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Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.
 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
 Berkeley, CA 94702

Phone: 510.843.2222 • **Fax:** 510.843.5351
www.goldengateaudubon.org
ggas@goldengateaudubon.org

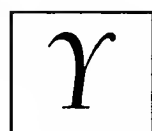
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Giving *The Gull* New Wings



You may notice that *The Gull* has a new look this month. These changes aim to reflect the breadth of Golden Gate Audubon Society's work, from our conservation and advocacy efforts to our education and birding programs, which connect people of all ages and backgrounds with the wildlife and wild places of the greater San Francisco Bay.

Some of the changes are stylistic. Small changes to the layout and the addition of the "Inside" preview bar on page 1 show you at a glance what is happening at GGAS and how you can get involved. We are also working to refine the content of *The Gull* in order to ensure that each month's newsletter highlights the scope of our work.

In the few months I have served as Executive Director of GGAS, I have been continually impressed by the dedication and initiative of our many volunteer supporters: from the activists who protect vulnerable places and wildlife to the corps of volunteers who monitor and restore wildlife habitat around the Bay; from the volunteers who lead and support our education programs in San Francisco, Oakland and Alameda to those who share their time and expertise with GGAS members through field trips, birding classes and other activities, and those who give their time in the GGAS office and support GGAS in a variety of other ways.

Our members and volunteers are at the very heart of GGAS' work, and *The Gull* is one of the primary ways we celebrate our efforts and achievements. We want to ensure that *The Gull* is as timely, interesting and interactive as possible—and that it serves your needs as members of GGAS.

As we continue to refine *The Gull* over the next few months, we would love to hear from you. In particular, we are interested to know how *The Gull* can be more useful to you. For example:

- What features are most interesting to you?
- How do you most use *The Gull* (e.g., Field Trip information, Classes and Programs information, activist or volunteer opportunities, conservation or education updates)?
- What would you like to see more (or less) of in *The Gull*?
- Is there anything not currently included that should be part of *The Gull*?
- How do you get most of your information about GGAS (i.e., *The Gull*, our Web site, calling the GGAS office, other)?
- How would you feel about having more information provided online (such as Field Trips directions, Observations, etc.)?

Please share your thoughts with us. You may send your comments to the GGAS office via mail or fax, or e-mail us at ggas@goldengateaudubon.org.

I hope you will find these changes give you a better sense of our work and emphasize the vital role you can play in helping us to achieve our mission.

by Elizabeth Murdock
 Executive Director

P.S. Special thanks to all of the dedicated staff and volunteers who have helped to initiate this process, including Marj Blackwell, Eva Guralnick, Mark Briggs, Tomas Latham, Susan Groves, Arthur Feinstein and Kathryn Blake.



Elizabeth Murdock

Anne McTavish

Birds and Flowers Abound on GGAS Backpack Trip

Following is a report on the third annual, 20-mile birding backpack trip in the East Bay Ohlone Wilderness, led by veteran GGAS trip leader Kathy Jarrett, in May 2003.

Our four-day trip was postponed for two days after the Weather Channel showed rain for Friday and Saturday, May 2–3. It was still raining when our group of seven backpacking birders met at Lake Del Valle at 10 a.m. on Sunday, May 4, and the rain continued as we shuttled to Sunol to begin hiking. It was so wet we saw a Great Egret by the side of Vallecitos Road. Thankfully, by the time we arrived at Sunol, the rain had stopped.

Leaving our backpacks behind for a while, we birded along the creek and the meadow where we saw Western Bluebirds, Yellow-billed Magpies, Black Phoebe, Scrub and Steller's Jays, Cedar Waxwings and Acorn Woodpeckers. Strapping on our backpacks, loaded with three days' worth of provisions, we hit the trail, mucky from rain. Carol Kuelper was our botanist again this year. The wildflowers were fantastic, and streams were flowing. We climbed steadily to Backpacker's Camp and pitched our tents, made the trek to get water, and enjoyed an early dinner.

In the morning, the tents were damp with

dew but no rain, so we were able to dry them in the sun. Three people left to return to Sunol, and we remaining four began the climb toward Rose Peak, which, at 3,817 feet, is only 50 feet below the peak of Mt. Diablo.

It was a great day for hiking, and we saw birds and blue and yellow carpets of wildflowers. Lots of cows stared at us. We had three different sightings of a Golden Eagle; who passed over us and circled back so close we couldn't believe it. We saw Lark Sparrows and Horned Larks, White-throated Swifts and Starlings. We saw Red-winged Blackbirds singing at a small pond with a patch of reeds. We arrived at Maggie's Half Acre, our second camp, with not too much energy left after our six-mile uphill trek and were greeted by an incredible number of Acorn Woodpeckers.

After dinner, we climbed among more



Carol Kuelper, Blair Jarrett and Lisa Jackson purifying water at Williams Gulch.

Kathy Jarrett

beautiful wildflowers up to Rose Peak and saw Lick Observatory on Mt. Hamilton to the south. Throughout the night, at this most remote of the campsites on the Ohlone Trail, we heard the continual sound of aircraft beginning their descent to San Francisco International Airport.

In the morning, we awoke with sun on our dry tents and a Spotted Towhee singing on a sunlit bush. Noting the fog rushing in, we hastened to pack our gear before it got damp

BACKPACK TRIP, continued on page 7

Join GGAS' First Quail Work-a-thon on November 15

Thanks to volunteers from GGAS and the Presidio, quail are now nesting at Quail Commons, where once there was only iceplant. We are also starting a new habitat restoration in Harding Park at Lake Merced. In order to keep these successful programs going, GGAS will hold the first-ever Save the Quail Work-a-thon on Saturday, November 15, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Participants in the work-a-thon will ask sponsors to pledge an hourly rate to the volunteers, who will restore quail habitat to earn their pledges. For example, a pledge of \$7.50 an hour (about minimum wage) for a volun-

teer who works four hours will earn \$30 for GGAS' Save the Quail campaign. At the same time, the volunteer will have created new quail habitat. Of course, our volunteers are worth much more than just \$7.50 an hour, and we are confident they will earn more than just one pledge.

GGAS has been central to the effort to restore dwindling quail populations in San Francisco. It is clear that habitat restoration is effective in bringing back the quail, but we have much more to do to insure their long-term survival in the city. Funds from the work-a-thon will be used to support the

work of our Save the Quail campaign—from habitat restoration to conservation planning efforts.

How You Can Help

Help GGAS Save the Quail by joining one of our restoration teams from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, November 15, or by sponsoring a volunteer. Watch for more information in the October issue of *The Gull*, or call the GGAS office to sign up. You can also read more about our Save the Quail campaign online at www.goldengateaudubon.org (see "Conservation").

GGAS Pier 94 Workday

At low tide on a Sunday morning in early August, more than 30 volunteers joined two wetlands experts in removing non-native cordgrass from the Pier 94 wetland on San Francisco's southern waterfront.

Erik Grijalva and Katy Zaremba, both biologists with the California Coastal Conservancy's Invasive Spartina Project, led the volunteer effort. The project is designed to control several species of aggressive non-native cordgrass (*Spartina*) that threaten to overtake thousands of acres of critical shore-bird foraging habitat in San Francisco Bay and to disrupt the Bay's ecosystem. The non-native cordgrass grows thicker and faster than native cordgrass, forming dense marsh that displaces mudflat habitat, slows water flows and cumulates sediment. (For a full description of the project, visit the web site at www.spartina.org.)

While some volunteers ventured into the

mud to remove smaller plants the old-fashioned way by hand-pulling, Eric and Katy led others in "blanketing" stands of larger cordgrass. Deprived of sunlight, the plants should be dead when volunteers return to remove the covers a year from now. Volunteers cut the "blankets" on site from large rolls of 12-foot-wide fabric and covered stands of cordgrass as large as 50 square feet. For some stands, they tied fabric sections together with grommets and staked them in place. For the largest, they created overlapping 50-foot strips and anchored them with riprap found readily at hand.



Experts and volunteers "blanket" stands of cordgrass at Pier 94.

Anne McLavish

This was the third wetlands workday sponsored by GGAS at the emerging Pier 94 wetland, conducted in conjunction with the Port of San Francisco, Sunset Scavenger and Hanson Aggregates.

by Nancy Smith

Five Years of "Marsh Madness"

Over the past five years, more than two dozen dedicated GGAS volunteers have been regularly counting thousands of birds at Arrowhead Marsh in Oakland for a scientific census. The bird count is helping the East Bay Regional Parks District evaluate the success of the 70-acre wetlands, whose restoration was spearheaded by GGAS.

Last May, the census volunteers were honored at a picnic held at the marsh. The honorees were:

5-year volunteers

Kathryn Blake, Kay Bloom, Howard Brownson, Tim Cleere, Judith Dunham, Sue Gallagher, Cathy Hubbard, Marilyn Nasatir, Elizabeth Sojourner, Carol Thorpe, Ed Walker.

4-year volunteers

Joan Collignon, Barbara Haley, Scott Lambert, Jill Lawrence, Melanie Lutz, Mona Mena,



Charlotte Nolan

Arthur Feinstein honors Arrowhead Marsh volunteers at a picnic.

Horacio Mena, Charlotte Nolan, Courtenay Peddle, Inge Svoboda.

3-year volunteers

Bob Battagin, Betty Bercenson, Kristin Doner, Anne Hoff, Lory Poulson, Mike Richter, Phila Rogers, Marian Whitehead.

Recent volunteers

Bruce Cobbledick, Ruth Sayre, Sara Toas, Sophia Wong.

The information provided by the census will be invaluable in evaluating the wetland restoration and in furthering the work of wetland scientists. To date, the success is evident, as thousands of birds, including a number of unusual species, make use of the marsh. Come join us and be a part of this wonderful project.

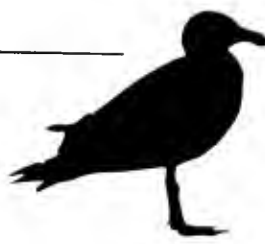
How You Can Help

You can join this group of committed conservationists. Volunteers are divided into eight teams of two or three and usually contribute two hours a month to the project. Funds may be available for a training session for novice birders. To volunteer, call the GGAS office.

by Carolyn Kolka
Census Coordinator

PROGRAMS

Anne McTavish



We're back with a line up free, monthly programs in San Francisco and Berkeley featuring prominent speakers on a variety of informative and entertaining topics focused on wildlife and the environment. We meet socially at 7:00 p.m.. Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. Watch for details about upcoming programs in future issues of *The Gull*. Check for updates online at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

San Francisco

San Francisco meetings are held in the County Fair building at Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way. Directions are available online at www.strybing.org/visiting/page2.html.

Friday, September 12

Michael Parayno: "Backyard Birding"

Artist Michael Parayno builds birdhouses of recycled wood and other found objects. The owner of Berkeley Rustic Birdhouses, Michael has a wry sense of humor, giving the houses

such descriptions as "Certified Pre-owned Birdhouses," "Fixer-upper," or "California Nouveau Riche." Michael will talk about his work and demonstrate how he builds the houses. www.berkeleyrusticbirdhouses.com.

Berkeley

Berkeley meetings are held at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin). Directions are available at www.northbrae.org/directions.html.

Thursday, September 18

Dennis Schmitt:

"Ultimathule — the Edge of the Earth"

Dennis will show slides and talk about the latest Peary Land Expedition to Greenland, supported in part by GGAS, in which he and Dr. Peter Skafte studied the northern-most populations of some bird species and undertook various mountaineering and anthropological studies as well.

New Saltwater Bird Identification Class

Hone your birding skills in a five-session workshop on saltwater birds led by Courtenay Peddle. Courtenay is a long-time East Bay birder who has spent thousands of hours honing his own water-bird skills at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park.

This GGAS workshop will start with an orientation meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, October 29, at the GGAS office. The other four sessions will be two-hour weekend field trips to East Bay wetlands—Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline in Oakland, Hayward Regional Shoreline, and Alameda's Elsie Roemer Wildlife Sanctuary. Among the birds studied will be ducks, geese, terns, gulls, waders (egrets and herons) and shorebirds.

The workshop is geared toward intermediate birders. A scope is useful but not necessary. Enrollment is limited to 15 people so that each participant can receive personal attention. This class is limited to GGAS members. The cost is \$60 per person; no refund for missed classes or field trips.

To register, send a check in the amount of \$60 made payable to **Golden Gate Audubon Society** to the GGAS Office at 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA, 94702. Unless the information is on your check, please provide your phone number and e-mail address. You can also register by VISA or MasterCard by calling the GGAS office at 510.843.2222 during business hours.

Wish List

Table, Chairs and Bookshelves

The GGAS office needs a small table (roughly 3 feet in diameter) and a set of two to four chairs that could serve as a conference area in the Executive Director's office. We are also looking for some bookshelves.

Volunteers

GGAS offers multiple opportunities for volunteering—from community activism through our Conservation Committees to wetland and wildlife monitoring to habitat restoration and environmental education.

- **Conservation Activism.** Join one of four committees focusing on East Bay Conservation, West Bay Conservation, the Alameda Wildlife Refuge or Latin American bird conservation.
- **Armchair Activists.** Join this volunteer group that commits to sending a letter once a month to policymakers, and make your voice heard.
- **Wildlife Monitoring and Habitat Restoration.** Find out about opportunities to monitor wetlands in the East Bay or San Francisco and join our list of restoration volunteers.
- **Education and Interpretation.** Find out how you can support our Environmental Education Programs and our birding and field trips.
- **Photographers/Writers.** Send us your unusual, unique photos of Bay Area birds and articles you've written on birds or birding for possible publication in *The Gull* and/or on our Web site.
- **General Support.** Assist with a variety of tasks at the GGAS office—from helping with mailings and data entry to program support.

If you can fill any of these needs or are interested in getting involved, call the GGAS office at 510.843.2222 or email us at ggas@goldengateaudubon.org. To learn more about our programs, visit www.goldengateaudubon.org. Thank you.

FIELD TRIPS

Susan Groves



Tilden Regional Park

Berkeley

Saturday, September 6

Leader: Rusty Scalf

510.666.9936; Rscalf@jps.net

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Nature Center parking lot for this half-day trip. We will explore Jewel Lake and other areas. We hope to see migrant warblers, vireos, flycatchers and resident birds. Beginners welcome.

Enter the park from either Canyon Dr. (where Spruce meets Wildcat Canyon Rd.) or Shasta Rd., off Grizzly Peak Blvd.



Meet at 7:30 at North Berkeley BART.

Birding for Kids at Strybing Arboretum

San Francisco

Saturday, September 6 and October 4

San Francisco Nature Education Leaders: Nancy DeStefanis, Angie Geiger, Scott Walker and Strybing Arboretum Docent Darin Dawson

Sponsored by GGAS, Strybing Arboretum and San Francisco Nature Education
415.876.5220; myblueherons@yahoo.com

9:00 –11:00 a.m. Meet at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first-Saturday-of-the-month bird and nature hike through exciting micro-habitats. Arrive 15 minutes early to see exhibits—beaks, bones, feathers, nests. For ages 7 and older. Each child should be accompanied by an adult. Bring binoculars, small notebook and pencil. This trip will be offered every month from September to April.

Call Susan Groves, Field Trips Committee Chair, at 510.654.5954:

- if you have difficulty reaching a leader and need information,
- if you have suggestions for trips, or
- if you are interested in leading a trip

Arrowhead Marsh

Alameda County

Sunday, September 7

Leader: Bruce Mast; 510.435.1371

(no calls after 9 p.m.); Bmast@alumni.rice.edu

Meet at 9:00 a.m. Join us as we welcome back returning shorebirds. Bring a scope if you have one. Beginners especially welcome. Take I-880. Exit at Hegenberger Rd; head west. Right at Doolittle Drive. Right onto Swan Way, left into MLK Shoreline Park. Follow the park road to the end.



Strybing Arboretum

San Francisco

Sunday, September 7 and October 5

GGAS co-leaders: Allan Ridley, Rick Ferrick; Strybing Arboretum Docents: Helen McKenna, Linda Lyons.
415.566.3241

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several micro-habitats attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome.

Las Gallinas Sewer Ponds

Marin

Saturday, September 13

Leader: Bob Lewis

510.845.5001; Rlewis0727@aol.com

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the parking lot for this half-day trip. We'll see a variety of water birds, raptors and more in migration. Beginners welcome.

Take 101 north and exit at Lucas Valley Drive. Go east on Smith Ranch Rd. to the end. Take a sharp left to the sewage treatment ponds, just before the county park. Drive past the headquarters to the parking lot on the left.



Meet at 8:00 at North Berkeley BART.

Hayward Shoreline

(West Winton Ave.)

Saturday, September 20

Leader: Bob Lewis

510.845.5001; Rlewis0727@aol.com

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the West Winton entrance to Hayward Shoreline for this half-day trip focusing on shorebirds.

Take Hwy. 80 south to Winton Ave. exit. Take Winton west towards the Bay. Drive to the parking lot at the end of West Winton. Beginners welcome.



Lincoln Park Bird Walk

San Francisco

Sunday, September 21

Leader: David Armstrong

415.305.7681; darmstrong99@yahoo.com

Meet at 7:00 a.m. on Merrie Way (the parking lot up the hill from the Cliff House). A walking tour of some of San Francisco's finest fall birding locations. We will be covering about 4 miles of mostly flat terrain (with a few short climbs/stairs) in search of migrating landbirds, seabirds and vagrants. Trip finishes around 11 a.m. Please wear good walking shoes and carry plenty of water. Trip limited to 12 people. Call to reserve.



California Quail, Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park.

Alan Hopkins

The Bay Trail

*San Leandro Marina to
Hayward Shoreline Regional Park*
Sunday, September 21

Leader: Kathy Jarrett; 510.547.1233;
kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at 9:15 a.m. at San Leandro Marina Park. On this 14-mile round-trip biking and birding excursion, we will see birds on the bay, in the marsh, in the fields and aloft. Dress in layers, and bring lunch and liquids. Bicycle helmet required.

From 880 in San Leandro, take the Marina Blvd. Exit west 1.4 mi. and turn left onto Monarch Bay Dr. The road ends in 1 mi. at the park. AC Transit bus #55 has its terminus here; these buses have bicycle racks.

Wednesday's at the Marsh

Arrowhead Marsh, Alameda County
Wednesday, September 24

Leader: Courtenay Peddle; 510.532.8911
(no calls after 9 p.m.); capeddle@there.net

Meet at 9:30 a.m. for a 2-1/2 hour stroll. We should see lots of shorebirds and perhaps Clapper Rail. All levels of birders welcome. Bring scope if you have one.

Take I-880 south to Hegenberger, then west on Hegenberger to Doolittle Drive. Right on Doolittle, right onto Swan Way. Left into the park. Drive to end for Arrowhead Marsh parking lot.

Coastal San Francisco

Saturday, September 27

Leader: Dan Murphy; 415.564.0074

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot between South and Middle Lakes (Chain of Lakes) near the 41st Avenue and Lincoln Way entrance to Golden Gate Park. We will bird in Golden Gate Park, at Lake Merced, and in GGNRA in search of migrating flycatchers, warblers, sparrows and other vagrants. Bring

lunch and be prepared for cold weather near the coast. Beginners welcome.



San Bruno Mountain

South San Francisco

Saturday, October 4

Leaders: Doug Allshouse,
Herb Brandt; 415.239.2711

Meet at 9 a.m. at the headquarters parking lot on Guadalupe Canyon Parkway on this half day trip, which is a joint activity with the Friends of San Bruno Mountain. We expect to see migrating and resident birds.

[\$] to park in lot if gate is open

Upper San Leandro Reservoir

Moraga

Saturday, October 4

Leader: Bob Lewis
510.845.5001; Rlewis0727@aol.com

Meet at 10:00 a.m. in the Valle Vista Staging Area for this 3 -hour trip. Grassy hills, pines, oaks and open water provide varied habitats for land birds and waterfowl. Beginners welcome. Rain cancels.

Take Hwy. 24 to Orinda and exit on Moraga Hwy. Continue approx. 4 miles to Canyon Rd. Turn right at the traffic signal and continue 1.2 mi. to the Valle Vista Staging Area on the left.



Hawk Hill

Marin

Sunday, October 5

Leader: Stefanie Arthur; 415.587.9282

Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the platform with the wingspan diagrams. Hawk Hill, in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, is the premier hawk watch location in the West. Each fall, about 20,000 hawks fly over Hawk Hill and over 200 volunteers engage in hawk counting, banding, telemetry and other research programs. Enjoy the majesty of the various species of hawks that migrate through the Bay Area. Bring lunch and liquids, sunscreen, hat. Layered clothing advisable. Trip will end around 2:00 p.m.

Coming from Marin County, take the last exit before Golden Gate bridge. Turn left at stop sign, then right into the GGNRA, on Conzelman Rd. Drive to top of hill and park. Walk up to Hawk Hill via the gated fire road. From San Francisco, take the first exit after the bridge which is Alexander. Turn left, drive under the freeway. Turn left and then right into the GGNRA. You will be on Conzelman Rd. Parking limited so come early and carpool if possible.

East Bay Drivers/riders meet at 9:00 at North Berkeley BART.

Carpool. If you can share a ride or if you need a ride, call Susan Groves at 510.654.5954.

[\$] **Entrance fee** required.

BACKPACK TRIP, continued from page 3

and were on the trail by 8:45.

One highlight of the morning was a mixed flock of Hermit and Townsend's Warblers in a sycamore tree. We decided not to depart from the main trail to descend to Stewart's Camp for lunch and were rewarded with great vistas and the song of Meadow Larks. The oak trees had leafed out and the sycamore trees were just beginning to get their leaves; elderberry and buckeye were almost in bloom. We saw Cabbage and West Coast Lady butterflies and ladybugs. We made a long steep descent to William's Gulch, where we filtered some water to replenish our almost empty water bottles, and one person left us to hike out that night.

The remaining three of us stopped at Boyd

Camp for our last night of camping overlooking Lake Del Valle. The water supply is nearly a half-mile round trip down and up a steep slope. It rained during the night, and as we dried our tents the next day in the morning sun, we were treated to a flock of Western Tanagers and one female Black-headed Grosbeak feeding in the trees just below the camp. We arrived back at Lake Del Valle in time to have lunch in the campground and to observe the nearby sycamore tree alive with birds. House wrens were nesting, Western Bluebirds mating, and Ravens alighting. Forster's Terns made passes over the nearby creek.

We're already looking forward to next year's trip. We hope you'll join us.

by Kathy Jarrett

Coming Soon!

An eight-day birding trip to Panama is being planned for next spring, starting March 15, 2004. If you are interested in participating, contact Steve Margolin at 530.342.6476, or see the October *Gull* for more details.

OBSERVATIONS

May 1 – July 31, 2003
Bruce Mast



After a three-month break, this issue covers an extended reporting period full of bird activity, encompassing the cool, rainy weather and migrant fall-outs of early May, the vagrants of late May and early June, the height of the Spring/Summer breeding season, and the first returning “winter” visitors in July.

Loons to Ducks

Beginning 26 July, observers reported an **Arctic Loon** (*Gavia arctica*) offshore at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN (PP; GG, BH). On 12 May a **Yellow-billed Loon** (*Gavia adamsii*) flew past Seal Rock, SF (BF). On a 4 May outing to Coyote Hills RP, ALA, the Albany Adult School Bird Class found a Least Bittern (RSc; mob).

One 8 May, a bicycle-birding Big Day produced 2 Greater White-fronted Geese and 2 Eurasian Wigeons at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN (JC). On 11 May, the L. Merritt, ALA, SFBBO nest monitors spotted a Northern Shoveler among the Mallards (BM; SS). On 21 May, a Green-winged Teal and her 4 hatchlings were seen cruising the waterbird pond at Redwood Shores, SM, (RT). Several Harlequin Ducks summered with us, including drakes at PRNS, MRN, (KB; DWi), and, for the second straight year, at Coyote Pt Yacht Club, SM (RT). At Bodega Bay, SON, a Greater Scaup showed up on 28 July with 2 Surf Scoters. According to the SON BBA, there are only 3 summer records for SON (MH, KG). A Common Goldeneye dropped in at the Albany Mudflats, ALA, on 24 June and 1 July (BF).

Raptors to Alcids

Making a rare appearance away from the Central Valley, a Swainson's Hawk flew over Lick Hill, SF, on May 4 (AH). Between the 12th and 19th of July, a flurry of Swainson's sightings were reported from Highways 12 and 29, in NAP (SG, JRo, FO, JS, MF). An observer at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, on 8 May

noted a calling Black Rail (JC). On 7 June, Common Moorhens were at Coyote Hills RP, ALA, (GB, MB), and Farallon Islands, SF, (PP). A Moorhen pair at Five Brooks, PRNS, MRN, produced 2 broods in July, totaling 6 chicks (KA, EK).

Snowy Plover nests were found for the first time at Roosevelt Beach on 31 May (JM, DSi, RFi). Nest monitors for SFBBO reported multiple adults and chicks in the saltponds from Redwood City to the Dumbarton Bridge (PM). By 23 July, Snowys were back on Ocean Beach, SF (AH; HM).



American Redstart

Two East Bay observers reported Semipalmated Sandpipers during the reporting period, including 1 on 4 May along the Richmond Bay Trail, CC (BP) and 6 at the Albany mudflats on 24 June (BF). Honors for most unusual peep sighting go to the **White-rumped Sandpiper** (*Calidris fuscicollis*), first discovered on 31 May at the I Ranch, PRNS, MRN, and observed through 3 June (CL, LL; mob). On June 12, a first-year Franklin's Gull was seen just offshore at Pigeon Pt, SM, winging north (RT).

Black Terns visited briefly on 5 May, when an observer at Heron's Head, SF, got distant

views of 7 individuals heading north over the bay (BF). Black Skimmers returned to the South Bay at Don Edwards NWR, ALA and along the Ravenswood Trail loop, SM. On 27 July, Observers found a single Marbled Murrelet at an unusual inland roost near the Bear Valley Trail, PRNS, MRN (JY, AL).

Doves to Thrashers

Single White-winged Doves turned up on 30 May at Bodega Bay, SM (DN), and on 14 June near Pescadero, SM (RT). A rare Sacramento Valley breeder, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo wandered out to the Farallon Islands, SF, on 20 June (PP). A Long-eared Owl turned up in Mitchell Cyn, Mt. Diablo SP, CC, on 7 June (DW). On June 4, a Common Nighthawk made a rare foray into N. Berkeley, ALA (EBE).

Spring migration generated a number of Vaux Swift sightings and several tantalizing views of Black Swifts. A Redwood Region Ornithological Society field trip to Geyster's Rd, SON, on 17 May, found a flock of 20 (AW; mob). Two days later, a flock of 12 passed over Mt Davidson, SF (BF, PS). Black Swifts were also spotted on 25 May over Dolores Park, SF (KM) and the following day along Hwy 1 and Gazos Cr. Rd, SM (RT). However, Black Swifts have not returned to Año Nuevo SR and breeding colonies on the central coast remain elusive.

On 4 May, a Black-chinned Hummingbird visited a feeder in Martinez, CC (DW). A Madrone Audubon Society Birdwalk on 22 May also observed a Black-Chinned at SOL County Park (LT; mob). A Costa's Hummingbird made it out to the Farallon Islands, SF, in early June (PP). A few Calliope Hummingbirds passed through in early May, visiting Coyote Pt, SM (RT; AE) Mt. Davidson, SF (GM, LwE), and Mitchell Cyn, Mt. Diablo SP, CC (DL; mob). A female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker showed up in GGP, SF, on May 21 (MZ).

Empids were well represented in the May migration wave, with 6 Willow, 14 Hammond's, 3 Gray, and 5 Dusky Flycatcher reports. The most intriguing flycatcher was a possible **Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher** (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*), seen on 30 May at Mt. Burdell Open Space Preserve, MRN, but never refound (DH). In early June, an Eastern Kingbird spent several days near

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

the H Ranch, PRNS, MRN (JH, JE, KB; mob). A 2nd bird turned up along Skyline Blvd, SM, on 27 July (DS). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher made it to the region on May 3-6, frequenting the C Ranch, PRNS, MRN (ME; SR, LHu).

On 6 June, a Mt Davidson, SF, migration watch found a singing Red-eyed Vireo (PS). Red-eyed Vireo also joined the vagrant show at PRNS, MRN, on 10 June (RS). Between June 10 and 12, a Gray Catbird was seen several times at Bodega Bay, SON (DHo; DN). A Catbird also passed through the Farallon Islands, SF, on 19 June (PP). Finally, a Sage Thrasher accompanied a major migrant fall-out at Coyote Pt, SM, on 3 May (RT; AE).

Wood Warblers to Finches

Migration produced numerous reports of typical western wood warblers, including Nashville, Black-throated Gray, Hermit, and MacGillivray's Warblers. The season also brought a eastern vagrants, including a **Worm-eating Warbler** (*Helmitheros vermivorus*), which made it to B Ranch, PRNS, MRN, on 10 June (RS). On 5 June, birders found a Summer Tanager at Kennedy Grove Regional Recreation Area, CC (BG, LG, JJ, JCo). Central CC was also an excellent area for sparrows. A Black-chinned Sparrow was heard and Sage Sparrows were seen near the South Gate to Mt. Diablo State Park, CC, on 17 May (LC). The latter species was also reported from the park a week earlier near Juniper campground (MR). The Redwood Region Ornithological Society Field also found a Sage Sparrow on a 17 May field trip to Geyster's Rd, SON (AW; mob).

The reporting period produced at least 7 Rose-breasted Grosbeak reports: 2 from PRNS, MRN (RS, PS), single reports from Mt. Davidson and Lincoln Park, SF (PS, HC), Portola SP, SM (DS), Farallon Islands, SF (PP), Coyote Hills RP, ALA (GB, MB), and a San Gregorio, SM, bird that lingered for 2 weeks in mid-June (RT; GD, AE, DB, PB). Two Blue Grosbeaks were spotted, the first on 2 May at Crissy Field Marsh, SF (AH), and the second on 23 May on Patterson Pass Rd, ALA (RCi). Indigo Buntings made one-day appearances on 12 May at Mt Davidson, SF (PS), on May 18 at Garin/Dry Cr. Pioneer RP, ALA (TM), and

Wood Warbler Sightings

Tennessee Warbler			American Redstart		
June 7	Farallon Islands, SF	PP	June 2	Mt Davidson, SF	PS
Northern Parula			June 4	Presidio, SF	JC
May 4	Mount Burdell, MRN	RS; mob	June 7	Farallon Islands, SF	PP
May 26	Pescadero & Dearborn Cr., SM	GH	June 10	Outer PRNS, MRN	RS
June 7, 20	Farallon Islands, SF	PP	June 26	Muir Beach, MRN	JW
June 10	Black Diamond Mines RP, CC	ES	July 24	Strybing Arboretum, SF	MZ; RC
June 12	Limantour Rd., PRNS, MRN	DWi	Worm-eating Warbler		
June 26, July 6	Muir Beach, MRN	JW; MS	June 10	PRNS, MRN	RS
Chestnut-sided Warbler			Ovenbird		
June 1	Pilarcitos Cr., Half Moon Bay, SM	RT	May 14	Farallon Islands, SF	PP
June 7	Farallon Islands, SF	PP	June 7	Farallon Islands, SF	PP
Magnolia Warbler			June 9	L. Merced, SF	BF
May 23, June 10	Outer PRNS, MRN	RS, JL	June 10	Outer PRNS, MRN	JL
June 7, 20	Farallon Islands, SF	PP	Northern Waterthrush		
Black-throated Blue Warbler			June 7	Farallon Islands, SF	PP
June 8	Montara, SM	AJ	Hooded Warbler		
Blackburnian Warbler			May 10	Outer PRNS, MRN	DVP
June 7	Farallon Islands, SF	PP	May 19, 23	Bayview Hill, SF	BF; DA, mob
Palm Warbler			May 23	Outer PRNS, MRN	RS
June 7	Farallon Islands, SF	PP	June 6	Presidio, SF	BF
Black-and-white Warbler			Canada Warbler		
June 7, 20	Farallon Islands, SF	PP	June 10	Outer PRNS, MRN	RS
June 7	Outer PRNS, MRN	CL	Yellow-breasted Chat		
			May 3	L. Merced, SF	DM
			May 3, 4	San Bruno Mountain Park, SM	HB; CDL
			May 16	GGP, SF	JC
			May 26	Pescadero & Dearborn Cr, SM	GH

Abbreviations for Observers: DA, David Armstrong; KA, Ken Archibald; MA, Myla Ablog; DB, Dennis Braddy; EB, Ellen Blustein; EBe, Erica Bermen; GB, Gary Baker; GBI, George Bing; HB, Herb Brandt; KB, Ken Burton; MB, Michelle Baker; PB, Patricia Braddy; HC, Hugh Cotter; JC, Josiah Clark; JCo, Judi Cooper; LC, Les Chibana; RC, Roy Carlson; RCi, Rich Cimino; ADM, Al DeMartini; GD, Gary Deghi; JD, Jim Danzenbaker; AE, Al Eisner; JE, Jules Evens; LE, Lee Ellis; LwE, Lew Ellingham; ME, Mike Erb; BF, Brian Fitch; HF, Harry Fuller; MF, Mike Feighner; RF, Rich Ferrick; RFi, Robbie Fischer; BG, Bingham Gibbs; GG, George Griffith; KG, Kate Gonnella; LG, Larry Gibbs; SG, Steve Glover; AH, Alan Hopkins; BH, Bob Hirt; DH, David Herlocker; DHo, David Hoffman; GH, Garth Harwood; JH, Jim Holmes; KH, Keith Hansen; LH, Luanna Helfman; LHu, Lisa Hug; MH, Mike Heffernon; SH, Steve Huckabone; AJ, Alvaro Jaramillo; JJ, Judy Johnstone; EK, Emily Kearney; LK, Larry Kent; PK, Patrick King; SK, Steve Kohr; AL, Amy Lauterbach; CL, Cindy Lieurance; CDL, Calvin Lou; DL, Don Lewis; JL, John Luther; LL, Les Lieurance; RL, Rick Lebaudour; RLn, Robin Leong; BM, Bruce Mast; CM, Clare McAllen; DM, Dan Murphy; DMk, David MacKenzie; GM, Gary Meyer; HM, Harry Moss; JM, Joe Morlan; KM, Kevin McKereghan; PM, Peter Metropulos; TM, Tim Mouter; BN, Bess Nericcio; DN, Dan Nelson; BO, Bill Ousman; FO, Frances Oliver; KO, Kris Olson; EP, Eric Preston; BP, Bob Power; JP, John Poole; PP, Peter Pyle; BR, Bob Richmond; JR, Jean Richmond; JRo, Jim Rowoth; MR, Mark Rauzon; SR, Siobhan Ruck; DS, David Suddjian; DSi, Dan Singer; ES, Emilie Strauss; ESe, Emily Serkin; JS, John Sterling; MS, Michael Stevenson; PS, Paul Saraceni; RS, Rich Stallcup; RSc, Rusty Scalf; SS, Sara Soper; FT, Francis Toldi; JT, John Toldi; LT, Laurence Taylor; RT, Ron Thorn; MU, Myra Ulvang; DVP, David Vander Pluym; AW, Alan Wight; AWi, Adam Winer; DW, Denise Wight; DWi, Dave Wimpfheimer; JW, Jim White; JY, James Yurchenco; MZ, Matt Zlatunich

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; BBA, Breeding Bird Atlas; CBC, Christmas Bird Count; CC, Contra Costa; Cr, Creek; Cyn, Canyon; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L, Lake; MRN, Marin; MTY, Monterey; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; N., North; Pt, Point; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; RP, Regional Park; Rd, Road; Res, Reservoir; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve

on 7 June at Farallon Islands, SF (PP). Both an Indigo and a Lazuli/Indigo cross were reported between the 5th and 24th of June at Briones RP, ALA (GB; mob).

A Bobolink spent the week of July 13-21 with the blackbird flocks near the Estero Trail at PRNS, MRN (EB; mob). A Yellow-headed Blackbird made an appearance on 6 May at Hayward Shoreline, ALA (ESe). The next

month, on 8 June, a second Yellow-headed sighting was reported at Coyote Hills RP, ALA (LE). Pairs of Great-tailed Grackles continued near McNabney Marsh, CC, (Edith Black) and at Shadow Cliff RP, ALA (GBi; SH). The birds appear intent on establishing a foothold in the Bay Area. Finally, on May 22, a pair of Pine Grosbeaks took in the view from the summit at Mt Diablo SP, CC (TM).

ent tower designs, painting turbine vanes so birds could see them better, and having them emit sounds to scare off birds. None has made a difference. And engineers say that placing screens around the turbines would deflect so much wind, they would become ineffective.

After nearly a decade of research, scientists still cannot figure out how to make wind turbines safe for birds. At their May 2000 meeting, the Avian Subcommittee of the National Wind Coordinating Committee concluded that "[N]othing is known for sure to reduce avian fatalities significantly... Avoidance of areas with high bird use is the only proven way to avoid high levels of avian fatalities."

New larger turbines are now being used in the hope that their larger, slower blades will kill fewer birds. Studies have yet to support this conclusion.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a guidance for the siting of wind turbines on September 20, 2000, stating that such projects should, "Avoid siting towers in or near wetlands, or near other known bird concentration areas... Avoid areas with a high

incidence of fog or low-cloud ceilings, especially during spring and fall migrations."

Does that sound familiar? It defines the Bay Area. Obviously, the key is siting. Wind power makes no sense where there are lots of birds.

The San Francisco Bay Area is still a bird haven. One million shorebirds migrate through here every year, the largest concentration of shorebirds on the entire west coast of North and South America. A total of 500,000 migrating ducks pass through the Bay Area, and 20,000 to 40,000 hawks and eagles migrate across the Golden Gate and through San Francisco every year. Hundreds of thousands of songbirds migrate along our California coastline and thus through the Bay Area. San Francisco's watershed lands in Alameda County are one of the few places in the Bay Area that host Bald Eagles.

Let's not make the Bay Area a bird death trap. Let's put wind power where it can do no harm and indeed can be a "clean" power source.

The City of San Francisco is actively considering the use of wind energy. At a recent

San Francisco Board of Supervisors committee hearing on wind energy, GGAS and the Audubon California state office brought the issue of avian deaths due to wind turbines to their attention. We suggested that the City seek funds for several years of bird population studies in San Francisco locations where wind turbine farms or even individual wind turbines might be proposed. (Bird populations can vary significantly, so more than one year of study is recommended).

How You Can Help

If you live in San Francisco, contact your District Supervisor and express your concern about the impacts of wind turbines on birds. Suggest that before any wind turbines are established in San Francisco, the proposed sites should be monitored for one year, preferably two, to determine bird presence and to reject sites that demonstrate heavy bird usage. Address: (your) District Supervisor, San Francisco City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Plaza, San Francisco, CA, 94102.

by Arthur Feinstein

Director of Conservation & Education

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Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education and birding activities!

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DONATIONS, continued on page 11

Fall 2003 Bird Seed Sale

Friday and Saturday, October 3rd and 4th

The migratory birds are coming to join our local birds. Here's your chance to pick up quality Volkman seed at the GGAS Office outside normal office hours. Just fill out the adjacent Seed Order form and mail it to the GGAS office with your check or credit card information by Thursday, September 25th. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope so your order confirmation can be mailed back to you. You may also call the GGAS office at 510.843.2222 with your order and credit card information.

In filling out your order, please take advantage of the 10% GGAS Supporting Member Discount. If you aren't a GGAS Supporting Member, you can sign up by entering the \$20 dues in the "Sign me up as a GGAS Supporting Member" line near the bottom of the order form.

Most of our native birds favor either sunflower seeds (chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers, white-crowned sparrow, purple and house finches) or Nyjer Seed (goldfinches, pine siskins and chickadees). If you have a question about which kind of seed to buy, give us a call.

We will have plenty of extra seed on hand during the sale, so come down to the office even if you do not place an order. While you are at the office, check out our collection of standard field guides, CD-ROMs, bird-song CDs, plus new books such as:

- *Peterson's Advanced Birding* – \$19.50
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- *Sibley's Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America* – \$21.50
- *Sibley's Field Guide to Birds of Western North America* – \$21.50

We also have a few copies of the following at a special discount:

- *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, 3rd edition – \$14.00

Note: This sale is for GGAS Supporting Members and National Audubon members only. Prices include sales tax.

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them had never been to the ocean before.

After a ranger orientation and a picnic lunch, the families broke into groups for bird watching, beach clean-up, tide-pooling and drawing. Some older boys asked if they could play football, but after just a few minutes of play, their fascination drew them back to the tidepools.

The students' first-hand exploration at the ocean fit naturally with the GGAS watershed curriculum. Not only did they learn how trash and pollution go directly into the Bay, they now saw how the Bay was directly connected to the Pacific Ocean.

Ana Martinez described her field trip experience, "I could see that the work I was doing was really paying off. Most of the families had never had a chance to interact with nature, and they were asking when we would come back. Later, I went back to Half Moon Bay with three of my friends who had never been to the ocean."

Longtime GGAS volunteer Mica Sanchez commented, "At first, you sense a group of independent families. But on the bus trip home, they all come together to form one big family. I remember one day when the whole bus, all ages, were singing songs together in Spanish."

A Chance to Shine

Monica Lomas, a teacher at Lockwood Elementary School, says that GGAS' program gives children who are struggling with school a chance to shine. "One of my students struggled to understand the reading on our last field trip, but he could tell you everything about the plants and animals he saw and how they interconnect." She added, "We did a lot of clean up projects at our school, and despite the teasing from other classes, our kids constantly defended it. They explained how the trash would otherwise travel to the Bay and the damage it could do. It gave them leverage

to feel accountable for their environment."

A total of eight teachers and a principal worked to make the family education program a success, staying after school for the program and giving up their Saturdays for field trips. This year, the family program was made possible by a grant from the San Francisco Foundation and by individual donations. If possible, we hope to expand the program to all 16 elementary classes that we are working with this current school year.

How You Can Help

GGAS needs volunteers for classroom programs and field trips in both the elementary school and the family environmental education programs. We also need ongoing financial support to continue the excellent work of both programs. Please contact the GGAS office for more information.

by Amiko Mayeno
Education Director

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As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the GGAS office at 510.843.2222 if you have any questions.

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